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NEWSWEEK  
17 March 1980

POLAND:

## A U.N. Staffer Guilty of Spying?

Alicja Wesolowska stood with head bowed before three military judges in a Warsaw court last week. After seven months in solitary confinement, the 36-year-old woman looked drawn and old, and her hair had begun to fall out. Flanked by burly women wardens, she heard a string of witnesses charge that she had used her position as a secretary at United Nations headquarters in New York to spy for an unnamed NATO power, recruiting fellow Poles for her foreign "masters." After two days of testimony, she was found guilty. Her sentence: seven years in prison.

Although Poland conducted the trial in secret, sources said that a key government exhibit was an address book in which Wesolowska had listed the phone numbers of her many acquaintances in New York. At the U.N., her friends and former colleagues scoffed at the spy charges, describing Wesolowska as idealistic and thoroughly dedicated to her job as an international civil servant. What had bothered Warsaw authorities, they theorized, was that Wesolowska had obtained a job at the U.N. while she was in the U.S. as an exchange student. By doing so, she had bypassed the Polish Government's so-called *comité de jalousie* (jealousy committee), which screens candidates for U.N. posts—and attempts to ensure that those selected give their primary loyalty not to the U.N. but to Poland.

**Family Visit:** The case had broader significance than the fate of Wesolowska. She had been arrested in Warsaw last August while visiting her family en route to a new U.N. assignment in Mongolia. She was using U.N. travel papers, and under terms of a 1946 international convention designed to foster apolitical status for U.N. employees, she was theoretically immune from arrest, even by her own government, in the performance of her duties. Warsaw turned

down appeals for details and access to her by U.N. Secretary-General Kurt Waldheim. Last week, more than 1,300 U.N. staffers signed a petition demanding stronger action by Waldheim, whose approaches to Poland many considered feeble. "If this can happen to Alicja, it can happen to anyone," Lowell Flanders, president of the U.N. employees union, told NEWSWEEK's Joyce Barnathan. "Where does the U.N. stand if it can't protect its own staff members?"

Wesolowska

Krzysztof M. Krawczyk

